



The Southeast Region NAACP  
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Via Electronic Filing

Magalie Roman Salas  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Room CY-B402  
Washington, DC 20554

Date: October 22, 2001

Re: CC Docket No: 01-277  
Application by Bellsouth Corporation for Authorization Communications  
Under Section 271 of the Communications Act to Provide In-Region,  
Interlata Service

Dear Ms. Salas:

The Southeast Region NAACP, which includes Georgia, as one of Bellsouth as one of its seven states of jurisdiction, wishes to support the application of BellSouth to the FCC for expansion of its services to include long distance in the Georgia market.

As you are aware, the NAACP is the nation's largest and most effective civil rights organization and has been in existence since 1909. Equally important, the Southeast Region enjoys the largest membership within this nearly century old organization and Georgia is the most populous and geographically expansive state within this same region.

Additionally, Georgia still has both a large rural population and a large sector of low income and middle low income and working class families. Therefore, it is important to the NAACP that changes in cost and quality of telecommunication services be affordable to minorities and the general citizenry.

Recent telecommunications research evidences that where the market offers opportunities for competition, the low-income consumer benefits both in cost of service savings and improved service delivery.

Additionally, in accordance with the NAACP national commitment to close the digital divide and make technology more accessible to minorities, the Southeast Region supports all efforts to provide more avenues for more effective and speedy information access and sharing, via the phone or high speed Internet. Per the 2000 U.S. Department of Commerce report, African Americans, along with Hispanics, still trail far behind Caucasians and Asians in access the Internet. We recognize that such access is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for an acceptable quality of life, particularly in the areas of education, job readiness and h health, or an acceptable quality of life, particularly in the areas of education, job readiness and health.

BellSouth has been proactive on both the national and regional level in advocating for and introducing changes that will provide more avenues for inclusion of minorities in the ever-expanding technological arena. BellSouth has, also, distinguished itself in both its hiring and contracting practices as they relate to minorities. Expanding the company's services will increase the potential for greater partnership for affordable telecommunication services for currently locked out Georgia residents.

Therefore, The Southeast Regional NAACP recommends that FCC approve Bellsouth application for long distance service in Georgia and Louisiana.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rev. Charles L. White Jr.  
Regional Director